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Article Linking Pope to K.G.B. Arouses a Furor

Advisers Criticize Editor of Zionist Magazine

By ARI L. GOLDMAN

An article in the Zionist magazine *Midstream* that suggests the attempted assassination of Pope John Paul II in 1982 was staged by the Soviet secret service to camouflage the Pope's "Marxist leanings" has caused a furor among members of the magazine's editorial board.

Several board members have called for the removal of the editor of the magazine, Joel Carmichael, who wrote the article, "The Kingdom of God and the KGB." It was the lead story of last month's issue.

Others, however, including the New York chief executive of the World Zionist Organization, which publishes *Midstream*, have defended the independence of the magazine. The monthly journal, with a circulation of 15,000, carries articles on contemporary Jewish themes as well as fiction, book reviews, poetry and essays.

Author of Several Books

In his article, Mr. Carmichael, the 69-year-old author of several books about early Christianity and about the Soviet Union, wrote that, "despite verbal disclaimers," the Pope has consistently promoted Marxist ideology by his attacks on capitalism and his calls for the redistribution of the world's wealth.

"An indispensable element in the Pope's espousal of implicit Marxism," he wrote, "is obviously the need for camouflage."

"It is this need for camouflage," Mr. Carmichael continued, "that may help explain the apparent attempt on his life" in May 1981 by Mehmet Ali Agca, an attack "well-nigh universally attributed to the K.G.B. and its (Bulgarian) puppets."

The Vatican Ambassador to the United States, Archbishop Pio Laghi, was not available for comment at the Vatican Embassy in Washington.

The director of Catholic-Jewish relations at the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Eugene J. Fisher, said but that the article's conclusions were "totally astounding and against all the record as we know it." Mr. Fisher said that the notion of helping the poor was an integral part of Christian and Jewish thinking that "predates Marx by three millennia."

"On that kind of logic," Mr. Fisher continued, "one could conclude that Isaiah was a Stalinist."

Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, a longtime member of *Midstream's* editorial board, said he was "horrified" by Mr. Carmichael's conclusions.

"Anyone who writes this," Rabbi Hertzberg said, "is the Jewish equivalent of the kind of gentile who can believe in the Protocols of the Elders of Zion," an anti-Semitic tract depicting a worldwide conspiracy by Jews to take over the world.

Rabbi Hertzberg, rabbi emeritus of Temple Emanuel in Englewood, N.J., and a professor of religion at Dartmouth College, said he would seek the removal of the editor, who has been in the post for 10 years.

Kalman Sultanik, the chief New York executive of the Zionist organization and a member of the *Midstream* board, however, expressed confidence in Mr. Carmichael.

"*Midstream* is an independent journal," Mr. Sultanik, in response to an inquiry, said in a telegram from Jerusalem, where he is attending to organizational business. "Even the editor has a right to express his own opinion."

"It is a signed article," the telegram said. "Mr. Joel Carmichael expresses his own opinion, not the opinion of the editorial board nor of the World Zionist Organization. And we are open to opinions to the contrary."

However, Milton R. Konvitz, the chairman of the editorial board, said: "The question is not editorial freedom, but editorial responsibility."

Board Members Protest

Mr. Konvitz, a professor emeritus at Cornell University, said that he had heard protests about the article from several board members and that changes in the way the magazine is run would be on the agenda at the next meeting, in September, of the editorial board.

He said the Carmichael article had not been submitted to any board members for review.

In an interview at the *Midstream* office at 515 Park Avenue, Mr. Carmichael said he intended to stay in his post, and he defended his article as "perfectly responsible."

Carmichael Seeks to Clarify

"I think Jewish people should know that this is what is happening to this great Catholic Church," he said. "It is being penetrated by Marxist activism."

He said that the point about the Pope agreeing to the assassination attempt has been misconstrued. He said that the K.G.B., the Soviet intelligence agency, planned the shooting and that the Pope was an unwitting participant.

Saying he could have used the help of an editor in making the point of that passage more clearly, he asserted, "I am not vain about my style."

Mr. Carmichael is the British-educated son of Louis Lipsky, the energetic American Zionist leader who founded the American Zionist Organization. He said he changed his name when he was 19 "because I didn't like being introduced as my father's son."

In the article about the Pope, Mr. Carmichael takes note of the Vatican's condemnation of "liberation theology," the teaching popular in Latin America that uses Marxist analysis in emphasizing a commitment to the struggles of the poor. But he says the Vatican action was "very mild" and actually part of an attempt to hide the Pope's true leanings.

The Pope, Mr. Carmichael wrote, "has never, of course, actually endorsed Marxism."

"The Pope cannot, after all, be a Marxist," Mr. Carmichael wrote.